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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 019192

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/PAN:SMOREYBELL:VV
APPROVED BY ARA/PAN:SMOREYBELL
S/AB:AMB.BUNKER
ARA/PAN:GEN.DOLVIN
ARA/LA:WDROGERS
S/S:FORTIZ
NSC-MR LOW
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
ARA/PAN S/AB ARA/LA S/S
---------- 039003
O 262134Z JAN 76 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO GOVPANCANAL IMMEDIATE
USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 019192

EXDIS FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM BELL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES IN PANAMA RESULTING FROM
ARRESTS/EXILE OF BUSINESS LEADERS.

REF: PANAMA 0552

1. APPRECIATE THE EMBASSY'S TELEPHONIC AND TELEGRAPHIC
REPORTING OVER THE WEEKEND.

2. WE CERTAINLY AGREE WITH YOUR PLAN TO WAIT FOR THINGS
TO SETTLE DOWN SOMEWHAT BEFORE SENDING AN ANALYSIS OF TE
LONG-RANGE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE COURSE
OF BOTH PANAMANIAN POLITICS AND THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS.
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 019192

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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3. I THINK WE HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING OURSELVES THAT, IN CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS THESE, THE U.S. HAS EXTRAORDINARY POWER TO AFFECT THE COURSE OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN PANAMA, AND I HOPE WE CAN BE SMART ENOUGH TO EXERCISE IT WISELY, IN FURTHERANCE OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL LONG-TERM INTERESTS.

4. WE ALSO HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING OURSELVES THAT ALL POL-ITICAL ELEMENTS IN PANAMA WILL UE TRYING THEIR BEST TO USE THE UNITED STATES.

5. FINALLY I THINK WE HAVE TO KEEP REMINDING OURSELVES OF THE PROBABLE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTS IN PANAMA ON OUR OWN DOMESTIC FRONT.

6. INSOFAR AS PRESS QUERIES ARE CONCERNED (SEPTEL), IF ASKED WE WILL SAY SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT THE UNITED STATES DEALS WITH GOVERNMENTS AS IT FINDS THEM -- BUT THAT, GIVEN THE MAJOR NEGOTIATION NOW UNDER WAY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, WE ARE OF COURSE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS IN PANAMA CAREFULLY.

7. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS MAY WANT TO "CONSULT" AT SOME POINT WITH ORFILA AND PERHAPS IN CAPITALS. LATIN AMERICA HAS MADE THIS A HEMISPHERIC ISSUE AND NOW THEY MAY HAVE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN SOME WAY. ANY RECOMMENDATIONS YOU MAY HAVE OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.

8. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY WISH TO DO SOME "CON-SULTING" IN THE CONGRESS.

9. YOU AND YOUR PANAMA REVIEW COMMITTEE PRINCIPALS WILL WANT TO BE ESPECIALLY ALERT TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT RE-QUESTS FOR ASYLUM WILL BE RECEIVED. THERE ARE OUTSTANDING INSTRUCTIONS WHICH YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES WILL WANT TO REVIEW. THE LAST THING WE NEED AT THIS POINT IS AN ASYLUM "INCIDENT" -- AND, AS YOU KNOW, THERE HAVE BEEN SUCH BEFORE.

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10. ONE LAST THOUGHT. YOU MIGHT BE CONSIDERING WHETHER YOU SHOULD COME UP FOR CONSULTATIONS ONCE SOME OF THE "SETTLING-DOWN" HAS OCCURRED, TO HELP US THINK OUT FUTURE NEGOTIATING STRATEGY. I TOLD GONZALEZ-REVILLA THIS MORN-ING THAT FEBRUARY 5 WAS NOT REPEAT NOT A FIRM DATE FOR THE NEXT TALKS, GIVEN CURRENT UNCERTAINTIES. WE WISH TO KEEP THE PANAMANIANS OFF BALANCE AND WORRIED, AT LEAST OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE019192
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SMOREYBELL:VV
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760029-0757
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760121/aaaaaryp.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 PANAMA 552
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <02 NOV 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES IN PANAMA RESULTING FROM ARRESTS/EXILE OF BUSINESS LEADERS.
TAGS: PFOR, PN, US
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006